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ABSTRACT

Using the experiences of Rockland Community College (RCC) as examples, this paper suggests a number of successful cognitive and affective strategies for the educationally disadvantaged in community colleges, focusing on those which are competency based, cost effective and retention sensitive. First, trends in developmental/remedial education are reviewed, including the increasing emphasis on accountability and the maintenance of academic standards. Next, the paper explains RCC's College Skills Model for the delivery of remedial/developmental services, which includes an integrated, holistic, competency-based curriculum; assessment and advisement; homogeneity of groups based on skill levels; individualized instruction and learning contracts; a range of multi-media systems; formal support counseling groups; referral counseling; and tutoring. Next, the paper considers staff members' roles in RCC's College Skills Model, and looks at staff development efforts, especially those related to the introduction of computer-assisted instruction. The next section of the paper looks at the relationship between organizational structures and the remedial/developmental program, describing the effects of organizational changes in the areas of assessment and counseling. The final section stresses the importance of articulation and effective communication between remedial/developmental staff and other personnel in the institution. (LAL)

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Strategies for Maintaining Excellent Developmental Programs in the 80's

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The selection of some 166 exemplary programs in developmental education from colleges and universities throughout the country attests to the fact that remedial/developmental education is accepted as the norm in two-year institutions and as a necessity in many four year institutions.* With these programs meeting stringent criteria for excellence it is also apparent that the state of the art and professionalism in remedial/developmental education is also at a new all-time high. However, just as we think that we can sit back and enjoy with satisfaction the developments in remedial/developmental education and the status of our field, we are confronted with another set of challenges.

The trends toward greater accountability in higher education, decreased number of high school graduates entering colleges and universities, and reductions in federal funding affect remedial/developmental programs head on. Many of those institutions which decide to recruit other clientele to make up for the fewer students who are moving directly from high school to college (ages 18-20) find that they are admitting a larger proportion of new clientele who are older, who are from minority backgrounds and who are physically handicapped. We know from reviewing placement tests and from assessing the basic skills of these students that many of them are in need of remedial/developmental services in order to succeed in college. We are aware too that many of the students are unsure about their purposes for being in college, they are not certain what to expect from college and they are afraid that they will not succeed. They are not clear about their short range and long range vocational goals, they may be unaware of the vocational options which are available to them and they may be unrealistic about the requirements for various occupations. The scope and range of services necessary to meet the needs of these clientele require more not less from the remedial/developmental areas.

*Criteria for excellence as defined by the National Center for Developmental Education, Appalacian State University, included: 1)a written statement of program philosophy or rationale, (2) a written statement of program goals and component objectives, (3) a written description of all program components, (4) an ongoing evaluation program accompanied by an annual report demonstrating significant impact on student learning and development, (5) a statement of commitment from the chief academic and/or student personnel officer, and (6) the ability and willingness to respond to requests for information contained in items 1 - 5 above.

The emphasis in higher education on maintaining "standards" and on providing viable evidence of competency, especially in basic skills, also impacts directly on remedial/developmental education. We are expected to serve students with a wide range of needs and to prepare them to meet minimal standards which may be more stringent than in previous years. While we applaud the moves toward excellence in higher education, it appears that in an attempt to respond to the external and internal pressures relating to accountability in higher education some educators and governing bodies have over reacted and have established standards which in essence are impossible for students to meet given their educational deficits upon entry and the limited time available for remedial/developmental services. This procedure results in a "revolving door" which is both unfair to the students and ultimately costly to the institution. Virtually all the studies on attrition in higher education conclude that it is less costly to an institution to retain a student already enrolled than it is to recruit and admit a new student.

Although we are not sure of the total impact of decreased federal funding on higher education, we know that less money is likely to be available in the future for various support services such as Upward Bound and Special Services for Disadvantaged Students. With a larger number of institutions documenting need for funds to serve first generation college students who have educational and financial need the competition for the funds becomes greater than ever. For example, in the recent competition for $72 million in grants provided through Upward Bound, a program that encourages low-income high-school students to obtain post secondary education, it was necessary to obtain a minimum score of 97.1 points out of a possible 115 for funding. Some two dozen institutions didn't receive funding because scores on their proposals were only a point or two low.[1]

While some institutions will attempt to limit access as a way to meet the political and economic pressures, it is likely that only in the most elite institutions will there be no need for remedial/developmental services. We can't ignore the reality that in 1982 even at prestigious institutions such as Stanford and Berkeley some 90% of the entering freshmen were in need of some type of remedial/developmental education.[2]

Those institutions which continue to serve a wide range of clientele will need to develop new structures and new partnerships in order to serve a more diverse clientele. As institutional changes are proposed those of us engaged in remedial/developmental education will need to take a leadership role in educational decision making and planning. While we must be flexible, creative and pragmatic, we also must not compromise in the areas where we have an increasing body of data and experience indicating that which is effective in dealing with our clientele.

The focus of this presentation is on successful cognitive and affective strategies for the educationally disadvantaged which are competency-based, cost effective and retention-sensitive. Areas to be discussed are: (1) services and methods of delivery, especially new technologies, (2) staff roles and staff development, (3) institutional structure and organization, and (4) communication between developmental staff and other areas of the institution.

Although the examples of the strategies which I'm presenting stem from experiences at Rockland Community College, they are similar to those employed at many other institutions throughout the country. In reviewing these strategies, I'll show not only what has been successful, but I'll point out problems which we've encountered as well.

SERVICES AND METHODS OF DELIVERY

College Skills Model

When the remedial/developmental program at Rockland Community College was first developed in 1968 the staff recognized the need to design a curriculum to meet cognitive and affective objectives. Although the severity of the basic skills deficiencies of the students in the remedial/developmental program has increased over the years and the types of attitudinal and low self concept problems accompanying these deficiencies have been manifested in various ways, the dual problems have always existed. Therefore it seemed clear to the staff in 1968 that a unified approach toward dealing with the cognitive and affective was required. This has since been documented in the literature by Roueche and others.[3]

The process which we found useful in establishing the basic curriculum for the program was: (1) to identify in conjunction with the Chair-

persons of the English and Mathematics Departments the competencies required for entry into the first level English and Mathematics courses; (2) to identify the skills which students need to acquire in order to achieve the competencies (while we originally went through this process for reading, writing and mathematics, we later followed the procedure for study skills, listening, and logic and reasoning as well); (3) to assess the types of development in the affective domain that were necessary to change low self concepts and attitudes.

Furthermore, we determined that we needed a total programmatic approach. That is: (1) an integrated, holistic curriculum which is competency based, (2) assessment and advisement, (3) homogeneity of groups based on skill competency levels, (4) individualized instruction and learning contracts, (5) a range of multi-media systems, (5) formal support counseling groups, (7) referral counseling, and (8) tutoring.

Having identified the areas for remediation and development we then examined the means by which the greatest gain could be acquired at the least cost to the institution. Although we wanted to establish an individualized instructional framework for instruction and we wanted to deal directly with affective development we found that the cost for one-on-one instruction and counseling was prohibitive. We, therefore, examined which of the objectives could be met using delivery systems other than the instructor or counselor. We determined, for example, that hardware and accompanying software did exist for reading and study skills which matched our objectives. We decided to use a traditional classroom with one instructor for 20 students for part of our communication skills instruction and a laboratory conducted by a paraprofessional staff for another portion of the instruction. Mathematics skills instruction was designed for a classroom with one instructor for 20 students. We also designed a series of reinforcement modules to provide additional diagnosis and prescriptive activities to support Communication Skills and Mathematics Skills. We designed a psychology course (Understanding Human Behavior) in which the students could learn how to deal with a college content course and to apply the skills they acquired in Communication Skills and another course which provided an orientation to the college (Strategies for College Success).

Most important, however, we developed a series of seminars to meet affective objectives. These seminars, consisting of 15-20 students, were directed by professional Counselors and were assisted by paraprofessional Counselor-Tutors.

We made modifications in the model begun in 1968 and by the Fall Semester, 1983, we had defined four levels of Communication Skills and placed students in the appropriate level based on reading and writing scores on the English Placement Examination which was being used as part of the newly devised College-wide Assessment and Placement process. Through discussions with the Chairpersons and Program Coordinators at the college we also had identified college credit courses in which the students were permitted to enroll when placed at various levels in the program.

The basic structure for Communication Skills consisted of four hours of instruction per week with a Master Instructor in a classroom, four hours of reinforcement per week with a Master Instructor in a classroom, and four hours per week with a paraprofessional Teaching Assistant in the Individualized Learning Activities Center (ILAC). Diagnosis, prescriptions and evaluation of activities in the ILAC were the responsibility of the Master Instructor. The paraprofessional assistant implemented that portion of the prescription conducted in the ILAC. A contract was drawn up between the Instructor and each student delimiting those ojbectives to be met and the ways in which mastery would be evaluated. The Instructor employed both group instruction and individualized instruction in the classroom while the focus of the instruction in the ILAC was on individualized instruction.

With this model it was necessary for the Master Instructor to understand the different learning styles of the students, to be knowledgeable about individualized instruction and mastery learning, to know what the hardware and software was designed to accomplish and to evaluate the effectiveness of the hardware and software for instructional purposes.

Mathematics Skills was delivered via a mediated mastery instructional system in the College's Media Learning Center. The curriculum consisted of the AVT Learning System in Mathematics published by Media Systems Corporation. Students were placed into Mathematics Skills based on scores on the Rockland Community College Mathematics Placement Exam-

ination. They were them assigned to Mathematics Skills sections where the Master Instructor provided diagnosis and orientation to the system. A formal prescription was developed for all students based upon their performance on the diagnostic pretests. Students then proceeded through the system until they completed each of the modules with 100% accuracy. Although the system is basically individualized, the Master Instructor and paraprofessional Teaching Assistants were available to help the students in the Center. Students who did not complete all of the assigned modules satisfactorily in one semester received IP grades and were permitted to continue in following semesters at no additional cost.

The program staff included one full time Coordinator, one full time Instructor, two full time Instructors, two Counselors, a portion of the instructional loads of two Instructors from the Mathematics Department and several paraprofessional Counselor/Tutors and Teaching Assistants. The diversified staffing model used throughout the program provided for an increased amount of instruction and support for the students at a cost which was affordable to the institution. Regularly scheduled time was provided for program staff meetings and for meetings between the professional and paraprofessional staff. We served about 350 students per year in Communication Skills and 250 students per year in Mathematics Skills. Evaluation data showed that the students were progressing well and that the retention in the program was high.*

However, in 1983 the President of the College informed us that the Board of Trustees had agreed that the college would maintain an open ad-

*Data from 1980 indicated that some 40% of the students completed the reading/writing requirments of the College Skills program in one semester and that of the 60% requiring additional work 15% completed the requirements after two semesters. Of those students enrolled in Mathematics Skills, 77% completed the required competencies in one semester and that of the 23% requiring additional work 3% completed the requirements in a second or third semester. Growth in reading each semester since the Fall, 1976 had averaged 1.5 grade level per semester on pre and post forms of the Nelson-Denny reading test.

missions policy despite pressures to alter the policy and that the college would continue to recruit and enroll a wide range of students from Rockland County. Therefore, in looking ahead to the time when the Special Services grant would be reduced or eliminated and the college would have to absorb the total cost of the remedial/developmental services the President mandated that we design a new model increasing our Full Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF) ratio from 10 to 1 to 15 to 1. He said that the diversified staffing model should be maintained and that we should move toward a greater use of alternative methods of delivery, especially computer assisted instruction.

While our first reaction was one of total disbelief and that it couldn't be done, we soon moved to design strategies to meet the mandates. However, we were determined that we try to maintain program excellence and the high levels of student progress that we had accomplished in the past.

The Alternative Model

In order to achieve our goal of an FTEF of 15 to 1, we agreed to pilot test an alternative model for College Skills in the Fall Semester, 1984. The following steps were taken:

1. Rearrangement of staffing patterns in Communication skills courses. In place of eight professional hours of primary instruction and supplemental reinforcement, we provided four hours of professional instruction and four hours of reinforcement staffed by a paraprofessional under the supervision of a Master Instructor. The four hours in the ILAC also continued to be staffed by a paraprofessional.

2. Increase of class size to a maximum of 30 students per class in a developmental reading course offered concurrently with English Composition 101 for students who pass the writing portion of the English Placement Examination but who do not pass the reading protion of the exam. The course focuses on group rather than individualized instruction.

3. Increase of class size in the Communication Skills class to a maximum of 23 students per class.

Staffing Patterns

We had always recognized that the developmental educator employed in College Skills fulfilled a number of roles. While each staff member dealt to some extent with each of the roles, various staff members

placed more emphasis on one or more of these roles. For example, the Master Instructor in College Skills might have a greater responsibility for reading or writing instruction while the Master Counselor/Assessment Specialist spent more time leading counseling groups and dealing with students' advisement. However, the adoption of the model meant that the Master Instructor's courseload might be more diversified. While some Master Instructors had taught courses such as Understanding Human Behavior, Strategies for College Success, and Efficient Reading as part of their regular load, the new model required that the majority of the Master Instructors would need to teach these additional courses in order to fill their teaching load. It also necessitated time for expanded curriculum development and course preparation.

The model required even greater emphasis for the professional staff in the areas of coordination, supervision and management due to the increased number of students they were required to serve on a daily basis. The new model mandated that each faculty member serve a minimum of 92 students per semester, representing a 50% increase in the number of students served by an Instructor previously. In order to perform the increased management and supervision functions one hour of released time for each FTEF was provided. This released time was used primarily for conferencing with the paraprofessional teaching assistants.

It was necessary to develop a staffing system that would serve the students effectively, that would fulfill the program needs and that would delimit the roles of the staff so that they clearly understood their responsibilities and the potential for adequate rewards as a result of completing their work satisfactorily. An assessment was made of the services that would need to be provided, the expertise and prior experience needed by the staff to provide the services and the college resources that would be available to the staff. The objectives, competencies and content of each College Skills course were also examined and decisions were made regarding which of the courses required delivery of instruction by a faculty member and which might be taught by a teaching assistant.

It became apparent that, as stated by Milton Spann, developmental educators fulfilled a variety of additional roles beyond those held by traditional college faculty.[4] Spann indicated that developmental educators were expected to assume roles ranging from manager to student advisor. These roles and responsibilities were in addition to the

college's requirements that faculty engage in professional development, institutional involvement and community services.

The new model provided for three distinct positions - Developmental Instructor, Developmental Counselor and Developmental Teaching Assistant. It was assumed that the professional developmental educators - Master Instructors and Master Counselors - would possess a solid theoretical foundation in the content of a specific academic discipline, hold appropriate graduate level degrees and fulfill college contractual responsibilities related to teaching and counseling hours, professional development, institutional involvement and community services. A similar delimitation of roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional Teaching Assistants was also determined. While Instructors and Counselors would continue to have direct responsibility for the development of the curriculum for each course, some courses previously taught by the professional staff would be taught by paraprofessional Teaching Assistants. A minimum of a bachelor's degree in an appropriate content area and some previous teaching experience would be required for the Teaching Assistants.

The results of the alternative model pilot were essentially positive. Data from the "College Skills Evaluation Report - 1983-1984" indicated that the entering reading scores of students in College Skills in the Fall, 1983 were significantly lower than the 1980 cohort. This appeared to account for the 30% passing rate of entering students enrolled for one semester full time in College Skills in the Fall, 1983. (In 1980 approximately 40% of the students completed the requirements for College Skills in one semester). A total of 58% received satisfactory grades enabling them to move to the next level of the program and only 11% showed no progress. In summary, there was no significant change or decrease in student progress as a result of the alternative model.

While we expected that the total number of paraprofessional hours would be increased significantly since more of the delivery of instruction was being done by paraprofessional Teaching Assistants we found that we had only a slight increase in total paraprofessional hours. This was due largely to our increase in class size which resulted in offering fewer sections of Communication Skills and Reinforcement.

The professional Instructors and paraprofessional Teaching Assistants expressed unanimous approval of the alternative model. The Instructors

said they preferred the alternative model because, although they had ultimate responsibility for the instruction, the students received instruction in Communication Skills and Reinforcement from two different persons each day. In the original model the instructors delivered instruction for four hours two days a week. In the alternative model the instructors delivered instruction for two hours and the Teaching Assistants delivered instruction for two hours for two days each week. The Instructors felt that the students appreciated having different Instructors with different personalities and teaching styles each day and that the increased time that the Teaching Assistants spent with the students strengthened the credibility of the Teaching Assistants. The Instructors also indicated that by having the Teaching Assistants teach Communication Skills Reinforcement the Instructors were freed to teach other courses in College Skills such as Strategies for College Success and Efficient Reading which was mutually beneficial to the students and staff.

Various staffing configurations were utilized. In some cases an Instructor worked with one Teaching Assistant and in other cases because of scheduling needs, an Instructor worked with as many as three different Teaching Assistants. The management time required for supervision of more than one Teaching Assistant was even more extensive.

The Instructors all agreed that the alternative model relied on the hiring of experienced and skilled Teaching Assistants. One Instructor said that for the model to continue working we would need a staff of Teaching Assistants as strong and as motivated as they were during the first semester of the pilot and he cautioned that that was a lot to count on over time.

The Instructors and Teaching Assistants planned their delivery of instruction in relation to their own individual strengths. Those Instructors with backgrounds in reading tended to introduce reading concepts while Instructors with backgrounds in writing who had strong Teaching Assistants with experience in reading were inclined to allow their Teaching Assistants to both introduce a reading lesson and to provide follow-up reinforcement as well.

One Instructor reported that "we played it by ear and changed our minds a few times and talked about it a lot until we came to what worked smoothly."

The Teaching Assistants all agreed that they liked the alternative model because they were able to deliver instruction and that they felt more like a "teacher" as opposed to an "assistant." They said that the responsibilities gave them an opportunity to use their own innate abilities and professional expertise to further their professional growth in teaching and to increase their credibility with the students. The Teaching Assistants reported that they were satisfied with the supervision that they received from the Instructors - "that they were always available and extremely helpful." They also were satisfied with the amount of time provided in their schedules for conferences with the Instructors.

The alternative model continued on a pilot basis in the Spring, 1985, with even more positive results. The model was institutionalized in the Fall, 1985 and student progress data have continued to be similar to that of past years. We will continue to evaluate student progress and to assess the heavier demands of the model on staff effectiveness and morale in the future.

New Technologies

During the academic year, 1982-83, the college began to establish a college-wide computer center and to make available microcomputers and funds for software for instructional use. The college administration urged the use of computer assisted instruction (CAI) throughout the college, and especially for the more expensive tutorial and support services. While the College Skills staff was initially very wary of CAI for remedial/developmental students it was generally felt that College Skills students must be able to function in an information-based environment if they are to be successful. While competencies in reading, writing, thinking and mathematics are still necessary for success in college, these skills alone no longer assure students of success in the college mainstream and in the world they will face after graduation. The staff felt that the addition of this competency within the curriculum of a remedial/developmental program was especially important because they believe that the open access college should provide equal educational opportunities for all of its students. To deny the opportunity to develop computer literacy would be to deny the students opportunity for the development of a basic skill necessary for survival in this new environment in which they must function.

In addition to developing computer literacy it was recognized that there are important secondary effects of using the computer in instruction, namely the potential of utilizing this powerful new tool for dramatically increasing students' time on task. The literature abounds with research which suggests that time on task may be the single most powerful variable affecting school achievement.[5]

However, unlike other curriculum development which occurred within College Skills, computer literacy required that the staff must first undergo training so that they could develop their own computer literacy. Therefore, the development of computer literacy was proposed as a major function of faculty development during the 1983-84 academic year with the outcome being the incorporation of computer literacy within the College Skills curriculum.

Phase One of the developmental activity provided for two staff members to be released the equivalent of three contact hours to begin to develop their own computer literacy and to explore the use of the microcomputer in College Skills. The developmental activities followed the model proposed by Frank Christ in the "Journal of Developmental and Remedial Education."*

Phase Two involved a pilot project in which 23 students (one course section) were taught to use the microcomputer and CAI for practice and drill during their regularly scheduled Reinforcement course period. Both the Master Instructor and Teaching Assistant assigned to the section worked with the students in the Computer Center (both also received released time for the pilot project).

A previous experience with the introduction of mediated instruction in Mathematics Skills reminded us that while some students may react very positively initially to instructional technology and programmed

* Learning About Computer Technology; Surveying Institutional Resources; Developing Your Computer Vocabulary; Reading, Viewing and Listening Your Way to Computer Literacy; Keeping Up With the Technology; Experiencing Computer Technology; Choosing A Computer System; Choosing Computer Programs; Writing Computer Programs; and Using Your Computer.

learning, without the presence of a person who expresses concern for the students and who demands accountability the students are likely to drop out, no matter how well designed the system may be. Therefore, we couldn't expect the majority of our students to use the Computer Center on an unsupervised, unscheduled basis.[6]

While the initial concerns relating to the quality and quantity of appropriate software available did remain to some extent and the staff's anxiety in having to learn a new skill did exist, the staff were soon convinced that CAI was of real value to the students. Some students who were "turned off" to traditional materials available in the ILAC were willing to spend time patiently working through exercises on the computer. The positive response of the students convinced the staff that CAI should be incorporated into the curriculum. All students now spend a minimum of two hours per week of scheduled time in the Computer Center. Of special note - the faculty member who was the most stressed regarding the use of CAI developed the CAI Taxonomy which is provided as a supplement to the Taxonomy of Materials used within the program.

INSTITUTIONAL ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

As we move into the future we'll see changes within our institutions, and our survival and our ability to provide quality services to our students will depend on our involvement in and influence on these changes. Areas which seem to be undergoing change in many institutions include assessment and counseling.

With a greater diversity of students and fewer financial resources we'll need to more precisely match student needs to instructional and other services. This will require a system of assessment and placement which is fair and which can be defended in an age of emphasis on consumer rights. The assessment process will also have to meet the requirements of external agencies, many of whom the institution depends upon for funding. While some institutions have relied on high school records and rather subjective measures for college admission and placement, we found that these records and procedures are no longer reliable. For our increasing number of reentry students and part-time students, high school records may not even be available. Assessment is vital if we are to match learning styles to various instructional delivery systems and thus reduce costly attrition. Assessment data also provides the institution

with information about the students which can be used in future development. One key to cost effectiveness is knowing who your clientele are, eliminating outmoded courses and programs and getting a head start on designing systems to meet the needs.

An example of the effect of an institutional structural change on the remedial/developmental area was the move at Rockland toward a comprehensive college competency assessment system. The process involved not only an examination of our current placement procedures, but a possible recommendation that all students attain competency in reading, writing and mathematics as a condition of graduation. Tied into this mandate was the requirement that students would be placed in various course sequences and programs based on assessment test scores. Obviously this also meant a review of the competencies required in College Skills and the relationship of our curriculum to various freshman level course options. This new procedure also impacted on the current needs assessment process we had in College Skills.

Instead of trying to avoid this institutional development, we chose to take a leadership role in its design and to be especially cognizant of the special needs of our clientele in the system design. We were very concerned that the new system focus on matching student needs and services, not on elimiating students who score low on placement instruments.

Many institutions are seriously cutting back on counseling services or are developing different systems for delivery of counseling services. Personal counseling is a luxury many institutions feel they cannot provide and, therefore, refer students to social service agencies for counseling instead. Academic advisement is still considered an important function within post-secondary institutions, but the responsibility for advisement is increasingly the function of academic departments. Vocational assessment is replacing vocational counseling in some institutions. The change in title not only implies that the function might be performed by someone other than a counselor, but it also suggests that the place for the function could be outside of a traditional counseling center. In reviewing the chain of events at Rockland we have seen a move to involve both faculty and counselors in vocational assessment. The function takes place in the Life Skills Center. Seminars ranging from "Self Awareness/

Occupational Choice" to "Alcohol and Drug Use and Abuse" are provided for credit. The Director of the Center offers leadership training sessions for faculty and counselors who upon completion of the training are certified to be group leaders.

This development posed special problems for those of us involved with the remedial/developmental program. We were forced to review our seminar offerings in relation to those provided through the Life Skills Center. We had to consider the implications of this development on the future of our unified comprehensive skills program. We asked questions such as: "What will be the future role of Counselors in our program? What type of training will be required? Will our instructional staff eventually be required to handle academic advisement and deal with students' complex personal problems? Is it realistic to add these responsibilities to an already over extended staff?

Because of the success we experienced with our alternative instructional model our college President suggested that we prepare an alternative model for counseling as well. The model we designed maintained assessment and advisement, group counseling and individual counseling for students within the program and continued counseling services for the students after they move into the college mainstream. A diversified staffing pattern designed through the Special Services Project will be used. Master Counselors will supervise paraprofessional Counselor/Tutors. These persons often are serving internships in College Skills as part of their requirements for a graduate degree in Counseling. The Counselor/Tutors will share in providing various counseling services. Together with the Director of the Life Skills Center, the College Skills counseling staff will also develop an appropriate course for the students when they enter the mainstream and will make plans to utilize all the appropriate counseling and support services provided by the college.

Since the College Skills Counselors' salaries had been funded through college adjunct money or Special Services Project funds it was necessary for the college administration to institutionalize the positions and to get additional salary lines approved through the college budget. Fortunately two counseling positions for College Skills were approved in the college's 1986-87 budget.

The college is currently involved in two other pilot projects which have implications for College Skills. The College Administration realized that the College Skills staff had the skills and experience needed to provide assistance in these important college wide projects and, therefore, requested their direct involvement. The first project - to provide services for students in academic difficulty involved: (1) the identification of clientele who may be in academic difficulty through the establishment of a College-wide mandatory system of midterm grades, (2) needs assessment of students who based on their midterm grades may be in academic difficulty, and (3) referral of students for a variety of services (Life Skills courses, individual counseling and advisement, tutorials, etc.). Various College Skills staff were asked to serve on both the planning team and as part of the staff chosen to provide assessment. The second project - to develop a college orientation course for all entering freshmen - also related directly to course offerings within College Skills. Again, the Vice President of Instructional and Community Services called upon the College Skills Coordinator to serve on the Task Force charged with the responsibility for developing the course content. After the course design is finalized the College Skills staff will need to examine the content of the new course in relation to the course, Strategies for College Success. Modifications in the current College Skills course or an alternate course may need to be designed to replace the College Skills course now being offered.

In summary, we consciously became involved with the new structures because we saw that our students could be served through these new structures if used effectively and we saw that we could extend our influence in the planning and implementation of services through the new structures as well.

COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

Paramount to all of the strategies that I've described is the need for articulation and effective communication between the remedial/developmental staff and other personnel in the institution. Some of our programs and services have existed because we quietly met the needs of the students who were sent to us and we didn't "get in the way" of the college mainstream. Others of us who received more exposure and administrative and faculty support initially were then expected to achieve "miracles" with

our students. Each year this became more difficult because the entry skill levels decreased and the attitudinal and self concept problems increased. In many ways we represented a threat to our colleagues. Our support of non-traditional clientele and egalitarian post secondary education made us appear a bit odd, naive, unrealistic, and most important, unwilling to uphold the standards of the institution.

However, I contend that because we have been in a position where we have had to defend our very existence, we have had to be more realistic, creative and innovative than have most other departments in the institution. We have had to uphold competency standards. Our effectiveness has been evaluated constantly because the products of our endeavors - our students - have been required to achieve competencies and to succeed in mainstream courses. If their achievement and staying power was generally good, we were considered successful. If the results were negative, we were accused of not being successful. We have had to assess the needs of changing clientele and to develop techniques and curriculum that worked. Not only have we had to do this once, but we've had to do it constantly.

The necessity to understand the needs of nontraditional clientele and to develop techniques and curriculum that are successful are special skills that will be increasingly required in the future. Our survival will depend on our ability to continue to do well that which we know how to do and to communicate that effectiveness to our colleagues within the institution. We will need to take a leadership role in retraining of college personnel and in the development of transitional courses and other effective instructional programs for our students. This can come from informal communication through task forces and committee functions or more formal organized communication through workshops and presentations.

We must be empathic and understanding of the financial and political pressures faced by our administrators and work cooperatively with them in the design of new structures. This communication can also take the form of informal discussion or more formal reports and proposals. We may need to expand our communication network and organize new patterns for coordinated services between our programs and services and other federal and privately funded projects such as TRIO and the Gannett Foundation. Our skills and expertise may very well be utilized in programs

offered off campus in business and industrial settings. In fact, as financial aid budgets are decreased, the private sector may very well become a major source of support for post secondary education and job retraining.

We must constantly provide evaluation data, case studies, attrition statistics and other information which can be used by administrators to provide evidence of student need, student progress and the success of services designed for our clientele. It was our experience that the continued evaluation of College Skills (over a 10 year period) and the Special Services Project portion (over a 9 year period) was the most convincing of our arguments to the President of the college for the continued support of College Skills and the institutionalization of staff positions.

Finally we need to provide opportunities for our students to communicate within the institution. We have held Spring Festivals in which the College Skills students demonstrated their special talents to other students, faculty and staff. Events have included musical and dramatic presentations, art and photographic exhibits and the preparation of and sharing of various ethnic foods. Some students have also been chosen to serve as peer advisors or peer tutors for new students within the program or for handicapped students in the college mainstream needing additional assistance. Through these activities the remedial/developmental students communicate to others in the institution that they do have worth and that they can make contributions to the institution.

The future will provide us with many challenges. However, I believe that we can meet these challenges and that we can emerge stronger than ever before.

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